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ABSTRACT

Traditional indices such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), grade point average (GPA), and various personality measures have been of limited value when used as selection criteria for counselor education programs. While these indices should not be eliminated, counselor educators need to establish more relevant selection criteria for their training program. One such criteria deserving exploration is potential effectiveness as a practitioner in the helping professions. The author presents here the outline of an instrument he has constructed which measures an individual's discriminative ability in identifying human emotional states. It consists of 45 audio tape segments, each of which expresses an emotional state which a viewer is asked to identify. Extensive reliability and validity procedures were performed and are reported. The author feels that the present instrument could be a positive step toward establishing greater compatibility between the selection criteria and the goals of the counselor education programs. Various uses by this instrument as a tool for training are discussed.
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NEW SELECTION AND TRAINING PROCEDURES FOR COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAMS.

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Traditional indices such as the GRE, GPA, and various personality measures have been of limited value when used as selection criteria for counselor education programs. While these indices should not be eliminated, counselor educators need to establish more relevant selection criteria for their training programs. One such criterion which needs to be explored is potential effectiveness as a practitioner in the helping professions.

Mandell (1971) has constructed an instrument which measures an individual's discriminative ability in identifying human emotional states. The initial instrument consisting of 300 audio tape segments, was administered to 3 counseling psychologists, 1 clinical psychologist, and 1 psychiatrist. All items not found to have at least 3 of the 5 judges agreeing on the expressed emotional state were discarded. The unrefined instrument, which then consisted of 100 items, was administered to 75 high school and university students and then subjected to a standard item analysis. After the item analysis, 40 items remained which demonstrated discrimination levels high enough to warrant retention. The instrument was then administered to a sample of 204 students and practitioners representing various areas of the helping and non-helping professions. Extensive reliability and validity procedures and data are reported.

Assuming that most counselor education programs involve assessing and attending to emotions, the present instrument could be a positive step toward establishing greater compatibility between the selection criteria and the goals of the counselor education programs. Various uses of this instrument as a tool for training are discussed.

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NEW SELECTION AND TRAINING PROCEDURES FOR
COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

(Paper presented at the 1972 APGA Convention)

By Robert B. Mandell*

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Traditionally indices such as grade point average, The Graduate Record Examinations, The Miller Analogies Test, and the National Teacher Examinations have been used as selection criteria for counselor education programs. In conjunction with one or more of these indices, recommendations are usually evaluated. Some selection committees use personality inventories such as the MMPI, Tennessee Self Concept, Personal Orientation Inventory, Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, and others to augment the selection process.

While many of these measures have been repeatedly used as the primary criteria for selection of candidates, I feel that heavy reliance on these measures should be seriously questioned. If we think of these selection tools as measures of criterion related validity, we then must evaluate the relevance of the criteria we are using. In other words, we first need to be clear on the objectives of a counselor education program, and then we need to choose the selection tools which insure the highest probability of admitting students who will succeed in meeting the program objectives.

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A counselor education program is a formal educational program that is usually presented on a graduate level. There are certain academic skills which are necessary in order to meet scholastic requirements. Here the GPA, GRE, MAT, and other measures of general academic ability can be useful predictors in selection. But it is extremely important not to lose perspective of the purpose of each selection criterion. With the above indices, we are dealing with general academic ability. To admit individuals to a counselor education program on the basis of academic ability alone, and then to expect to predict skills outside the

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academic area, is not only invalid, but illogical as well. The only way this could be done would be to use previously established empirical evidence which shows a relationship between academic abilities and other specific skills. I know of no such empirical evidence which shows a direct relationship between general academic abilities and human relation skills.

Even when personality inventories are used as tools for selection, it is important not to lose perspective of the purpose of this type of test. Measuring personal characteristics such as rigidity, temporal orientation, ability to criticize one's self, and various parts of the self concept may seem like very appropriate criteria when selecting individuals for a counselor education program; however, even their relevance should be evaluated in relation to program objectives.

Since the objectives of most counselor education programs are involved with both the areas of scholastic development and the development of human relations skills, it would seem logical to direct selection criteria towards these same areas. I think many programs have adequate selection procedures for predicting success in meeting the scholastic objectives. Where we fall short is in the use of adequate selection procedures for predicting success in meeting the human relation objectives of a counselor education program. Many professional schools such as medical, dental, and law require passing certain aptitude tests in addition to providing evidence of scholastic ability. Yet counseling aptitude tests are not being commonly used as selection criteria. I am suggesting we go a step further than using personality inventories. Rogers has strongly stated that less emphasis should be placed on diagnostic and theoretical courses, and that more emphasis should be placed on the selection of individuals who already have characteristics of empathy, congruence, and positive regard in their relationships with others. Carkhuff has said ". . . accurate discriminations are

essential to the rating that constitutes the basis for the entire selection process. We understand something about the nature of this dimension. We need to know much more."

We need to tap into an individual's potential for developing a helping relationship. In our selection of candidates to a counselor education program, we need to consider an individual's potential in both the science and the art of counseling. We also need to convince graduate school administrators of this if we are to move away from academic games and towards meaningful selection and training procedures.

I have constructed an instrument which measures an individual's ability to identify emotions. I'll briefly give you an outline of the methodology I used in constructing this instrument and in the establishment of its reliability and validity. The instrument took me over a year to construct, and I am resisting going into a lot of detail which might prove to be boring.

1. Three hundred tape segments of monologue and dialogue, ranging from 15 to 30 seconds in length, were recorded from television drama. Each of these 300 tape segments was used as a stem for a multiple choice test item.
2. An answer sheet was constructed with a multiple choice answer group designed to correspond to each of the 300 tape segments. Each test item, then, included a stem (the tape segment) and its appropriate answer group. The answer groups consisted of five answer choices, each choice being a different emotional state.
3. The initial instrument, consisting of 300 items was administered to three counseling psychologists, one clinical psychologist, and one psychiatrist; the five being defined as a panel of expert judges.
4. All items not found to have at least three of the five judges agreeing on the expressed emotional state were discarded. As it turned out the 100 items which were retained were 25 items on which all five judges agreed, 74 items on which four judges agreed, and 1 item on which three judges agreed on the expressed emotional state.

5. The unrefined instrument--consisting of 100 items--was completed by 75 students. After these test results were subjected to a standard item analysis, only 45 items remained which demonstrated discrimination levels high enough to warrant retention.
6. Equivalent halves reliability for a sample of 204 students and practitioners was .520. Test-retest reliability for a sample of 50 graduate students and practitioners in helping professions was .732. The ability to identify emotions from audio stimuli most likely falls into the category of a skill. Since it would be reasonable to expect lower levels of stability from a skill test than from an achievement test, the above reliability coefficients can be judged acceptable; especially when coupled with high validity coefficients.
7. Assessing the degree of inter-judge agreement on the expressed emotional states was one method used to study construct validity. The extremely high degree of interjudge agreement carries with it the implicit assumption that the judges were also in high agreement that emotional states were, in fact, being communicated.
8. Three of the four methods used to study criterion related validity compared the mean scores of several high and low criteria groups. One criterion used was Carkhuff's Empathic Understanding Scale and another was level of professional training. A fourth method was correlating the independent ranking of each counseling practicum supervisor's assessment of his students' abilities to identify emotions with the students' scores on the instrument.
9. The validity levels were found to be substantially high, that is, there were extreme significant differences between the mean scores of the high and low criteria groups beyond the .005 level of probability. It was therefore concluded that the instrument did measure ability to identify emotions.

The audio quality of the tape has to be improved and norms must be developed. As a rough guide, when validity data were being established, the high sensitive groups were getting from 60 to 75 % correct. The low sensitive groups were getting 40 % and below correct. The inventory is not ready to be used as a selection tool; however, it has been used for training purposes.

As a tool for training the instrument may be used in various ways...

1. It could give feedback to an individual concerning his accuracy in identifying emotional states from verbal communication. If his accuracy is poor, he might specifically seek to sharpen it, to check out his accuracy with greater frequency, or to hold his identifications more tentatively. He might find that it would be better for him to utilize a form of counseling or therapy which does not require such high levels of accurate discrimination. Some individuals might even find that it would be better for them to concentrate on an area of counseling which does not involve direct practice (such as research). In any case, the individual would have had his attention called to an important factor of which he might not have been aware. If, on the other hand, an individual's identifications are generally accurate, this knowledge might give him helpful validation and encouragement to express initial impressions and to rely on his experiences in the helping process. Rather than focusing most of his efforts on a basic discrimination of emotional states, this individual might better concentrate on learning how to select more helpful responses.
2. The instrument may be used to directly improve the identification of emotional states. An individual can replay the segments which seem to be giving him the most trouble until specific cues are identified by listening for the speech characteristics which accompany various emotional states. Because of the

impersonality of judgement required, the use of such training tapes should be less stressful than initiating training through actual counseling sessions.

3. The instrument can give an individual some very specific feedback, as opposed to general information, concerning his sensitivity. Since it touches upon a wide variety of affective situations and variations of emotional intensity, the specific errors made by an individual might reveal areas of resistance or hypersensitivity, and thus offer greater opportunity for self-exploration and personal growth. Such personal understanding should be an integral part of a training program which has as one of its goals to help individuals realize their potentialities as helpers.
4. The instrument could also serve to evaluate how a given course or training program affects an individual's ability to identify human emotional states. Initial scores on this measure might be compared with scores at later points in the program to judge the effects of training.

In his book, Sensitivity To People, Smith emphasizes the importance of this last point when he said one of the common weaknesses in clinical training is not a lack of effort in solving the problems of training, but rather a lack of objective tests which can measure the effectiveness of the attempts of training.

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